



U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20416

OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL OMBUDSMAN

October 15, 2008

Mr. Brian L. Warner
Environmental Services Supervisor
National Compliance Advisory Panel SBEAP's
P.O. Box 229
10125 W. Watergate Rd.
Cadillac, MI 49601

Dear Mr. Warner:

As indicated in our correspondence dated September 9, 2008, your case regarding the State Small Business Environmental Assistance Programs was referred to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Deputy Administrator for a high-level review and a response. I have enclosed a copy of the EPA's response with this letter.

As indicated in the EPA's correspondence, EPA's Office of Small Business Programs intends to facilitate a meeting for further dialogue about ways to strengthen their efforts in supporting the state programs. We will notify you once a meeting is scheduled.

Mr. Warner, thank you for bringing your concerns to my attention. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact my office by telephone at (202) 205-2417, fax at (202) 481-5719 or e-mail at Ombudsman@sba.gov.

Sincerely yours,

Nicholas N. Owens
National Ombudsman and

Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Enforcement Fairness

Enclosures
NNO/ez

The Mission of the Office of the National Ombudsman:
FOSTERING A MORE BUSINESS FRIENDLY REGULATORY ENFORCEMENT ENVIRONMENT.

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UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

SEP 30 2008

OFFICE OF
SMALL BUSINESS
PROGRAMS

Nicholas N. Owens
National Ombudsman and Assistant Administrator
for Regulatory Enforcement Fairness
U.S. Small Business Administration
Washington, D.C. 20416

Dear Mr. Owens,

I am writing in follow-up to your September 8, 2008, letter to Deputy Administrator Marcus A. Peacock regarding a case filed with your office by Mr. Brian L. Warner, Environmental Services Supervisor, representing members of the National Compliance Advisory Panel (NCAP) for the State Small Business Environmental Assistance Programs (SBEAP).

At EPA the Small Business Ombudsman (SBO) function resides in the Office of Small Business Programs (OSBP). OSBP serves as the Agency's gateway and advocate for small business in several capacities. Advocating for, and ensuring that the specific and unique needs of small business are met, in the area of compliance assistance, is one of those above mentioned capacities. EPA fully supports the compliance efforts of the state SBEAPs through the EPA Small Business Ombudsman (SBO), who oversees and monitors these programs. The Agency continues to provide available financial resources to support these efforts through activities such as the Small Business Environmental Home Page and annual SBO/SBEAP national conferences. We are also providing more FTE support to the SBO, and are very close to completing the recruitment process for additional staff. However, we understand that more should be done across the Agency to promote and strengthen the efforts of the state programs in providing compliance assistance to small business.

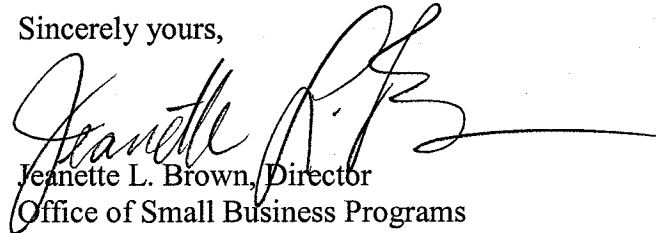
As you, Ray Spears, Deputy Chief of Staff, and I discussed in our recent telephone conversation, we are working to quickly facilitate a meeting with the appropriate parties involved (both federal and state) to discuss ways the Agency can improve oversight of the state SBEAP. We agree that these programs are becoming more and more vulnerable to budget cuts and elimination. We also recognize the great value they have in providing compliance assistance to small businesses nationwide.

As a first step, we have scheduled a meeting for October 9, 2008, with staff from the appropriate Agency program offices to discuss the concerns of the state programs and how we can best address these issues. We will then facilitate a meeting in coordination

with your office during the October-November timeframe, which will include Agency senior leadership and representatives of the NCAP and SBEAP. This meeting will provide an opportunity for further dialogue about ways to strengthen our efforts in supporting the state programs.

If you have any questions, or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 202-566-2075 or at brown.jeanettel@epa.gov, or Angela Suber, Small Business Ombudsman Team at 202-566-2827 or suber.angela@epa.gov.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeanette L. Brown", followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Jeanette L. Brown, Director
Office of Small Business Programs

cc: Ray E. Spears, Deputy Chief of Staff